CLAIMS

I claim:

1. A method providing peripheral device management through a firewall, the firewall blocking unauthorized access to a plurality of peripheral devices in an intranet, the method comprising::

pre-configuring a peripheral device to communicate a request to a predetermined web site upon booting up in the intranet, the web site being hosted by a server that does not have direct intranet access;

receiving the request at the predetermined web site from the preconfigured peripheral device;

in response to receiving the request:

generating a response based on the request, the response comprising one or more control commands used by the preconfigured peripheral device to perform one or more functions; and

communicating the response to the preconfigured peripheral device.

2. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the predetermined web site is a printer management service, the response is a printer configuration, and the peripheral device is a printer.

3. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the request is a configuration request, the method further comprising:

determining a default device configuration corresponding to the peripheral device; and

wherein the response further comprises the default device configuration.

4. A method as recited in claim 3, wherein the determining further comprises presenting a user interface to a customer for the customer to select one or more configuration settings corresponding to the peripheral device.

5. A method as recited in claim 3, wherein the determining further comprises identifying an action for the peripheral devices to take upon occurrence of a condition.

6. A method as recited in claim 3, wherein the forwarding further comprises:

encoding the device configuration as a web page comprising XML; and

wrapping the encoded device configuration in HTTP such that a peripheral device that includes an embedded web server can parse and execute the encoded device configuration to configure one or more settings or resources that correspond to the peripheral device.

7. A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising:

providing an e-mail address, the request being a notification message that is communicated to the e-mail address;

8. A method as recited in claim 7, wherein the peripheral device is a printer and the response is selected from a group of responses comprising of ordering a toner cartridge for the printer or dispatching a service representative to service the printer on-site.

9. A method as recited in claim 1, the method comprising:

providing an e-mail address, the request being a notification message being sent in response to the occurrence of a condition on the peripheral device;

the managing further comprising:

determining a response based on the notification message, the response specifying a set of control functions that address the notification message; and

forwarding the response to the peripheral device such that the peripheral device can implement the set of control functions.

10. A computer-readable medium storing computer-executable instructions that, when executed on a computer, performs the method of claim 1.

11. A method comprising:

communicating, by a peripheral device in a corporate intranet, a configuration request to a predetermined web site hosted by a server that is not in the corporate intranet;

in response to the communicating, receiving a predetermined device configuration from the predetermined web site; and

in response to the receiving, configuring the peripheral device based on the predetermined device configuration.

12. A method as recited in claim 11, wherein the predetermined web site provides a printer management service, the predetermined device configuration is a printer configuration, and the peripheral device is a printer.

13. A method as recited in claim 11, wherein the peripheral device comprises an embedded web server for generating Web pages, the communicating further comprising encoding the configuration request as a Web page.

14. A method as recited in claim 11, wherein:

the peripheral device comprises an embedded web server for parsing Web pages,

the received predetermined device configuration is a web page comprising encoded XML wrapped in HTTP,

the configuring further comprising:

parsing the XML and HTTP to determine one or more device settings or resources specified by the predetermined device configuration.

15. A method as recited in claim 11, further comprising:

in response to a condition, forwarding, a notification message to the predetermined web site;

receiving a notification response based on the notification message from the predetermined web site, the response comprising a set of control functions; and

in response to receiving the notification response, implementing one or more of the set of control functions.

16. A computer-readable medium storing computer-executable instructions that, when executed on a computer, performs the method of claim 11.

17. A system comprising:

a web site being configured to determine a default device configuration corresponding to a peripheral device, the peripheral device being pre-configured to communicate a request to the web site upon being booted up in an intranet that is protected by a firewall, the web site not being hosted by a server that is part of the intranet,

in response to receiving the request, the web site is configured to communicate the default device configuration to the peripheral device, the default device configuration being communicated through the firewall, the default device configuration being used by the peripheral device to configure itself.

18. A system as recited in claim 17, wherein the peripheral device comprises an embedded web server to communicate the request as a web page and to parse the communicated default device configuration, the communicated default device configuration being communicated as a web page.

19. A system as recited in claim 19, wherein the server that hosts the web site comprises an e-mail address, the request being communicated to the e-mail address, the request comprising a notification message that was generated by the peripheral device in response to a predetermined condition, the response being based on the received request.

20. A system as recited in claim 19, wherein the response comprises one or more control codes corresponding to functions to be performed by the peripheral device upon receipt of the response.